

On a Mission to Mow Down Marketing Mediocrity. **By Mavrick**

# Selling Your Edge



**W**e launched the EDGE series in January of this year and over the past three issues of *Textile Insight* we've discussed defining an EDGE, identifying your EDGE and keeping your brands' EDGE alive and well. That seems like a lot of energy and time focused on a relatively simple topic. But ideally, this deep dive into discovering and developing your EDGE has been thought provoking, if not enlightening.

Your business must sell something — whether that's products or services — in order to exist. That's not rocket science, just common sense. Indeed, selling is the whole point. To sell your brand successfully, however, your brand must connect with your target audience. A lack of connection, or perceived relevance, kills even the most amazing ideas or innovations.

## The Stakes Are High

The fact is, 10 percent of all startups fail in the first year. And a startling 50+ percent of businesses fail due to: 1) A lack of the proper product-market fit; and/or 2) Not having a sound marketing strategy.

Compelling statistics like these should encourage anyone trying to sell a product or

service to embrace the potential of the EDGE to their business strategy.

Tying all the pieces together to create a bullet-proof sales strategy is the task at hand in this final entry of our series on the EDGE. So, enough talk, let's get to some action steps.

## Edge Drives Marketing

Think of it this way: EDGE is brand or product relevance, while marketing creates response. Marketing tells the story coming from the vision created by your EDGE. And remember: virtually everything is a commodity. With that reality firmly in place, your EDGE takes on even more importance.

Where your brand seeks mindshare and success is undoubtedly crowded and competitive. Use your EDGE to stand out from the competition. Identify the unique solutions to your target audience's needs or wants. Here's a good example: Velcro, hook and loop fasteners, were invented as a new way to fasten things — a simpler alternative to buttons, snaps and zippers. Introduced to the market in the early 1960s, hook and loop was not a success. But when NASA adopted the product to keep objects attached to walls while in orbit, hook and loop fasteners were space age. Overnight Velcro's EDGE was "space age fasteners"...and a success. So successful,

in fact, Velcro has become a generic trademark — much the same as Kleenex. Now that's an EDGE!

Your EDGE is an idea that resonates with your market. While its principles may be firm, a good EDGE is not static, it is responsive and resilient to shifting consumer tastes and needs, economic factors and competitive trends. This requires that your EDGE be nurtured and tended to. Treat your EDGE as you would an asset.

## Fall In Love With Your Edge

Over the years I've advised startups not to be enamored with their product. More than likely the product will change and evolve — hopefully for the better. Great products fade into obscurity if they fail to keep pace with consumers' tastes.

Instead, I encourage brands to fall in love with their EDGE. Your EDGE ensures product evolution is within the boundaries of its original definition. Its resilience is essential in selling today and in future success. ■



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